

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (canceled)

2. (canceled)

3. (canceled)

4. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 16 , **characterized in that** the removal step is selected from the group consisting of one of time-controlled, sensor-controlled and event-controlled, and the parts of the system to be cleared comprise feed lines, valves, tubing, dead spaces, and patient intake elements.

5. (canceled)

6. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 5, characterized in that the patient intake elements are selected from the group consisting of nosepieces and masks.

7. (canceled)

8. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 18, **characterized in that** the evacuation step is one of time-controlled, sensor-controlled and event-controlled, and the parts of the system to be cleared comprise feed lines, valves, tubing, dead spaces, and patient intake elements.

9. (canceled)

10. (canceled)

11. (currently amended) The device according to Claim [[20]] 19, **characterized in that** the first gas line includes a

pressure gauge, a flowmeter and a gas valve and in that the second line likewise includes a pressure gauge, a flowmeter and a valve.

12. (currently amended) The device according to Claim [[20]] **19, characterized in that** the second gas line is a compressed-air connection.

13. (previously presented) The device according to Claim **19, characterized in that** the removal device includes the evacuation line, and the evacuation line comprises one of an evacuation unit and a connection to an existing evacuation line.

14. (canceled)

15. (canceled)

16. (currently amended) A method for the metered administration of one or more therapeutically effective gases to a patient, comprising a step to remove harmful or undesired substances from the gas carrying system or from parts of the gas-carrying system, **characterized in that** the therapeutically effective gases are selected from the group consisting of NO, CO, CO₂ mixtures used to stimulate breathing, H₂ mixtures, ~~N₂O mixtures~~, SF₆ mixtures, and nitrosoethanol, ~~and~~ the removal step comprising purging with at least one other gas or gas mixture selected from the group consisting of air, O₂, N₂, Ar, Xe, He, SF₆, mixtures thereof and other gases which do not have a therapeutic effect, supplying the one or more therapeutically

effective gases from a gas source through a first line to the patient, providing at least one shut-off valve in the first line in selective flow communication with an outside line leading to the atmosphere, opening the shut-off valve to open flow communication with the outside line, and flowing the purge gas through the first line and out of the outside line to purge the first line.

17. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 16, characterized in that the removal step further comprises evacuation in addition to the purging.

18. (currently amended) A method for the metered administration of one or more therapeutically effective gases to a patient, comprising a step to remove harmful or undesired substances from the gas-carrying system or from parts of the gas-carrying system, **characterized in that** the therapeutically effective gases are selected from the group consisting of NO, CO, CO₂ mixtures used to stimulate breathing, H₂ mixtures, ~~N₂O mixtures~~, SF₆ mixtures, and nitrosoethanol, ~~and the removal step is evacuation, supplying the one or more therapeutically effective gases from a gas source through a first line to the patient, providing an evacuation line in flow communication with the first line, and evacuating the first line by applying suction to the evacuation line and thereby applying the suction to the first line for removing harmful or undesired substances from the first line.~~

19. (currently amended) A device for the metered administration of one or more therapeutically effective gases to a patient, comprising a device to remove harmful or undesired substances, **characterized** by a therapeutic gas feed system including a first line feeding therapeutic gases selected from the group consisting of NO, CO, CO₂ mixtures used to stimulate breathing, H₂ mixtures, ~~N₂O mixtures~~, SF₆ mixtures, and nitrosoethanol, and the removal device including ~~at least one of a second gas line and an evacuation line~~ in addition to the first gas line, ~~and~~ the second gas line comprising purging structure for supplying a purging gas selected from the group consisting of O₂, N₂, Ar, Xe, He, SF₆, mixtures thereof and other gases which do not have a therapeutic effect, at least one shut-off valve in the first line, an outside line in flow communication with the outside valve, the outside line leading to the atmosphere, and the second line being in flow communication with the first line whereby upon opening the shut-off valve to open flow communication with the outside line purge gas may flow through the second line into the first line and into the outside line to the atmosphere.

20. (canceled)

21. (canceled)

22. (new) The device according to Claim 19, characterized in that there are two of the shut-off valves in the first line

spaced from each other and each of which has an outside line leading to the atmosphere.

23. (new) The device according to Claim 11, characterized in that there are two of the shut-off valves, each of the shut-off valves having an outside line leading to the atmosphere, one of the shut-off valves being upstream of the pressure gauge and the flowmeter and the gas valve of the first line, and the other of the shut-off valves being downstream of the pressure gauge and the flowmeter and the gas valve of the first line.

24. (new) The method according to Claim 16, characterized in that the shut-off valve is provided at the first line upstream from a pressure gauge and a flow meter and a gas valve in the first line, and providing downstream from the pressure gauge and the flow meter and the gas valve of the first line a further shut-off valve having an outside line leading to the atmosphere.

25. (new) The method according to Claim 16, characterized in that two of the shut-off valves are provided in the first line spaced from each other, and each of the shut-off valves having an outside line leading to the atmosphere.

26. (new) The method according to Claim 18, characterized in that at least one shut-off valve is provided in the first line in selective flow communication with an outside line leading to the atmosphere, and opening the shut-off valve when the suction is applied to draw air into the outside line and to the first line to additionally purge the first line with air.